TL38

--- Press Release ---

Chofu City Council Adopts Resolution Calling for Revision of Policy on East Timor

At a plenary session on December 19, the Chofu City Council adopted by standing vote a resolution calling for a revision of the Japanese Government's policy on East Timor. The resolution originated with council members and a Chofu citizens' group deeply concerned about the "Santa Cruz Massacre" that occured in Dili, the capital of East Timor, on November 12 and with the underlying cause, the invasion of East Timor in 1975 by Indonesia and subsequent occupation.

The City of Chofu has taken various actions in the past to promote world peace and friendship and understanding among peoples. It declared Chofu a non-nuclear city in 1983 and in 1990 passed resolutions declaring itself to be an international peace city, and calling for an early end to apartheid in South Africa, respectively.

In 1990 a group of citizens concerned about East Timor came together to form the Chofu East Timor Association. It has held study sessions on the East Timor issue and has invited East Timorese refugees to Chofu to speak to the public on the issue. Association coordinator is Ishiguro Kiko.

The Association, deeply concerned about the Santa Cruz massacre which is reported to have left more than 80 people dead, many injured, and to have resulted in numerous arrests, felt that it was essential that the Chofu local government, given its obligation to strive for world peace, take action from the City Council on the East Timor issue.

Of particular concern was the fact that the Japanese Government has consistently voted against United Nations General Assembly resolutions, eight in all, condemning the Indonesian invasion and supporting the right of self-determination of the people of East Timor. Furthermore, aware that Japan's enormous ODA to Indonesia (approximately ¥170 billion in 1991, a figure roughly equivalent to Indonesia's annual defense outlay) is contributing to the prolongation of the unlawful occupation of East Timor and to violations of human rights there, the Chofu residents considered it important to call on the Japanese Government to revise its policy with regard to East Timor.

Therefore, Chofu East Timor Association member and city councilwoman Sugiyama Noriko, an independent, tabled a "Resolution for a Revision of East Timor Policy" in the City Council, and the resolution was passed by a standing vote at a plenary session on December 19.

For further information, contact: Chofu East Timor Association
c/o Ishiguro ~~Kiko~~ Noriko
tel. 0424-88-1685